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UNCLAS WELLINGTON 000125

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EAP/ANP, OES/ENV JTHOMPSON
BRUSSELS FOR USEU

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [SENV](#) [AORC](#) [ETRD](#) [PREL](#) [NZ](#)

SUBJECT: NEW ZEALAND RESPONSE ON MERCURY ISSUE AT UNEP
GOVERNING COUNCIL MEETING

REF: STATE 18970

1. Poloff provided reftel demarche points to Lesley Woudberg, Environment Division, NZ Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT.) Woudberg stated that the GONZ would support the partnership concept advocated in the US draft resolution. She noted that the GONZ advocates a bilateral or national approach to the management of mercury as opposed to a new legally binding international regime. However, the GONZ will not be taking a prominent role in the mercury debate at the upcoming Governing Council (GC), and is not in a position to lead partnership initiatives in any particular sector on the management of mercury.

2. Woudberg noted that Donald Hannah, NZ Environmental Risk Management Authority (ERMA) has been involved in a number of conference calls with the US, Canada, Australia and South Korea on the further management of mercury. She added that reduction of mercury is not a priority for New Zealand, which has few major mercury emitters and where any man-made emissions are "overwhelmed by natural sources of mercury emissions from volcanoes." The GONZ has taken a number of steps over the last twenty years to reduce both the use of mercury and any man-made emissions.
Swindells